You generally should not lay a standalone sheet of plastic vapor barrier directly under a basement carpet pad. Concrete slabs need to breathe; trapping rising ground moisture with a tight plastic sheet often causes mold, mildew, and terrible odors. Instead, use a specialized **moisture-barrier carpet pad** (which has a breathable top film for spills while resisting ground vapor) or install a subfloor system. Facebook · Carpet and vi… +2

Why Standard Pads and Plastic Fail

- **Trapped Water:** A standard plastic vapor barrier traps moisture right against the cold concrete, creating a breeding ground for mold.
- **Absorbent Cushion:** Standard rebond or sponge carpet pads soak up liquid spills and humidity like a sponge, holding dampness beneath the fibers.
- **No Air Movement:** Without tiny amounts of airflow, vapor pressure builds up and breaks down carpet glues or backing. Facebook · Carpet and vi… +2

Better Options for Basement Carpeting

- **Moisture-Barrier Padding:** Use a specialized synthetic or closed-cell pad with a built-in moisture barrier. These pads block topical spills from soaking in and provide a thermal break from the cold concrete without suffocating the slab. Facebook · Carpet and vi… +2
- **Subfloor Panels:** If your concrete is prone to dampness, install an engineered subfloor panel system (like Dricore or a dimpled plastic membrane with OSB on top) before laying down standard pad and carpet. This creates an air gap and a true thermal break.
- **Synthetic Fibers:** Always pair your pad with synthetic, mold-resistant carpet fibers like nylon or Olefin rather than natural wool. Erskine Interiors